

Check It Out!

The Results of the School Library Media Program Census



Executive
Summary

January 2003

Minnesota School Library Media Programs

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How Do You **Check Out** a School Library Media Center?

Learning Opportunities

- ✓ Do most of the teachers and classes use the library media center's resources?
- ✓ Do students have access to the library media center and library media specialist throughout the school day?
- ✓ Do teachers and the library media specialist collaborate to coordinate what is taught in the media center and classroom?
- ✓ Do teachers encourage student use of the media center's resources?
- ✓ Do students' research projects use a variety of technologies to locate and use information?

Information and Reading Resources

- ✓ Does the media center have a current (less than 10 years old) and varied collection? (10-15 items per student or 5000 volumes, whichever is greater.)
- ✓ Does the media center have a wide variety of new books and other print materials that encourage and support reading and learning?
- ✓ Is the library media center energetic and inviting? Does it include:
 - A reference area?
 - A storytelling/book talk area?
 - An instructional area?
 - Displays and collections of student work?
- ✓ Does the media center have multiple, up-to-date technologies that provide guided access to:
 - The Internet?
 - An automated card catalog?
 - Multimedia production capabilities?
 - On-line and multimedia resources?

Availability, Programs, Policies

- ✓ Is the media center available before and after school?
- ✓ Is the media center large enough for individuals and classes to use at the same time?
- ✓ Is there a professional library media specialist who:
 - Teaches the information process?
 - Understands the uses of technology?
 - Selects and uses a wide variety of materials?
- ✓ Is the media program funded to maintain a level of materials and personnel that make a difference in student achievement?

You can learn more about media centers using the data from schools that responded to the census. Data is available by individual school and district at <http://www.metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/index.cfm>.

A more detailed checklist is available at MEMO Library/Media Center Report Card www.memoweb.org.

A quality school library is kid friendly and kid centered.

Check It Out! The Census Results

Fifty years of research has shown the power of school library media programs on student learning. What did the Census show about Minnesota's programs?

This study began with the premise that a well-funded, well-staffed school library media center can have a positive impact on student achievement regardless of the economic and social factors in the school and community. The more assets a school's library media program has—current collection of books and other materials, licensed media specialist, support staff, computers, Internet access, licensed databases, knowledgeable principal, and collaborative teachers—the more likely its students will score higher on standardized tests.

Metronet used a combination of an online census to collect statistical information and site visits to determine if Minnesota's school library media programs have the resources needed to impact achievement.

So, how do Minnesota school library media programs check out? Many strong, effective media programs operate in all parts of the state. A few are truly outstanding; many are excellent. However, an even greater number do not meet even the minimum *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs* in the key areas—staffing, teaching, collection, and funding. These key findings tell the story.

Library Media Specialists Make a Difference

- Schools with above average reading scores have school library media specialists (LMS) that work more hours. In the 633 Minnesota schools with above average reading scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment and Basic Standards Test, 423 (66.8%) had a media specialist who worked 36 hours a week or more.
- School media centers are open an average of 28.4 hours per week—the range of hours open is 1 and 43. The smaller the school, the fewer hours a media specialist is available for students.

Lots of Old Books

- Minnesota students are using books that are older than they are—and in some cases, older than their teachers. The average

copyright date of materials at all grade levels is 1985. An *average* date of 1985 means there are a lot of old books in media centers.

- Average per pupil spending for books in elementary schools is \$9.35, about 50% of the average cost of one book.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between higher reading scores and larger school media center budgets at the elementary level.

Commitment and Investment Make the Difference.

- Geography and size of the district do not have an impact on the quality of the program. Districts of all sizes that have made their media programs a priority have effective programs.
- The skill and training of the media specialist, level of professional and support staff, size of the collection and budget, the support of the principal, and the size of the school determine the effectiveness of the program.

The leaders of tomorrow will be those who know where to find information, how to evaluate it, and how to use it. School library media programs help create tomorrow's leaders, but the programs need professional staff and resources to make a difference for Minnesota students.



Check It Out!

Do Our School Library Media Programs Pass the Test?

You can find the Minnesota answers and much more in the Final Report on the results of the school library media program census at www.metronet.lib.mn.us.

1. What is the average copyright date of books in Minnesota school library media centers?

- A. 1999
- B. 1952
- C. 1985
- D. 1992
- E. 1970

Hint-
Ronald
Reagan was
President

Many books in the media center are older than this year's senior class!

2. If you were using a history book with a copyright date of 1985, which of the following events would you find in that book?

- A. Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Premier of the Soviet Union.
- B. Space shuttle Challenger explodes.
- C. Bombing of federal building in Oklahoma City
- D. Fall of the Berlin Wall.
- E. Collapse of the Soviet Union; Baltic States gain independence.
- F. South Africa votes to end rule by white minority.
- H. None of the above

Most kids today didn't even watch these on TV. Where will they read about these events?

3. If your assignment is to research a prominent American, which of the following books are you likely to find on the shelves of your school library?

- A. *Iacocca: An Autobiography*, Lee Iacocca 1985
- B. *Me: Stories of My Life*, Katharine Hepburn 1991
- C. *An American Life: An Autobiography*, Ronald Reagan 1990
- D. *It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography*, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf 1992
- E. *White House Years*, Henry Kissinger 1979
- F. *Personal History*, Katharine Graham 1997

Remember-
the average
copyright is
1985!
(1983 for high
schools)

What about the Internet? If you "Google" Lee Iacocca, you get 25,000 hits. Ronald Reagan- 45,000. How do you know the best ones? Ask the media specialist!

4. How many books per pupil does the average elementary school media center have?

- A. 16
- B. 6
- C. 36
- D. 44

Lots of books, but they're old! →

Extra Credit:

In Middle Schools - 29
 In High Schools - 27

5. How much does the average media center spend annually on books per pupil? Circle the right answer.

	High	Middle	Elementary
A	\$9.35	\$7.35	\$4.50
B	\$10.50	\$8.50	\$7.00
C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> \$11.29	<input checked="" type="radio"/> \$10.44	<input checked="" type="radio"/> \$9.35
D	\$21.10	\$25.00	\$18.75

← See the connection here?

Elementary school media centers spend less than the cost of one book per pupil per year!

6. What was the average price of a book in 1985 and 2001:

	1985	2001
Children's Book	<u>\$11.61</u>	<u>\$16.55</u>
Young Adult Book	<u>\$14.56</u>	<u>\$19.15</u>

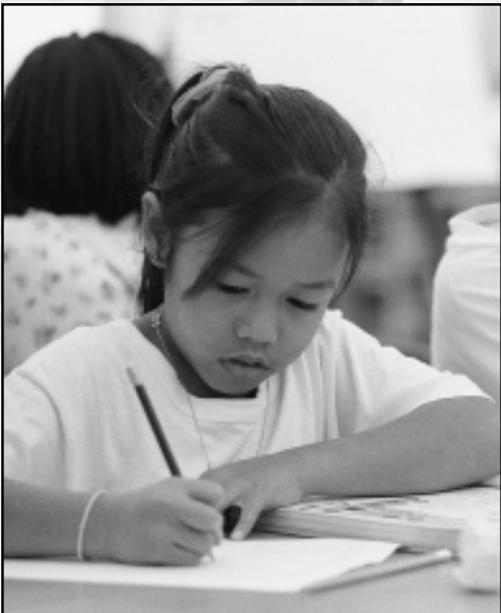
←

7. Which of the following make a difference in how effective a school library media program is for student learning?

- A. A licensed media specialist in charge of the program.
- B. A supportive and knowledgeable principal.
- C. Teachers who understand and use the media program to enhance student learning.
- D. Up-to-date technology and access to fee-based information sources and the Internet.
- E. A district level media coordinator.

F. All of the above.

How is your media center doing—does it have all of these things?

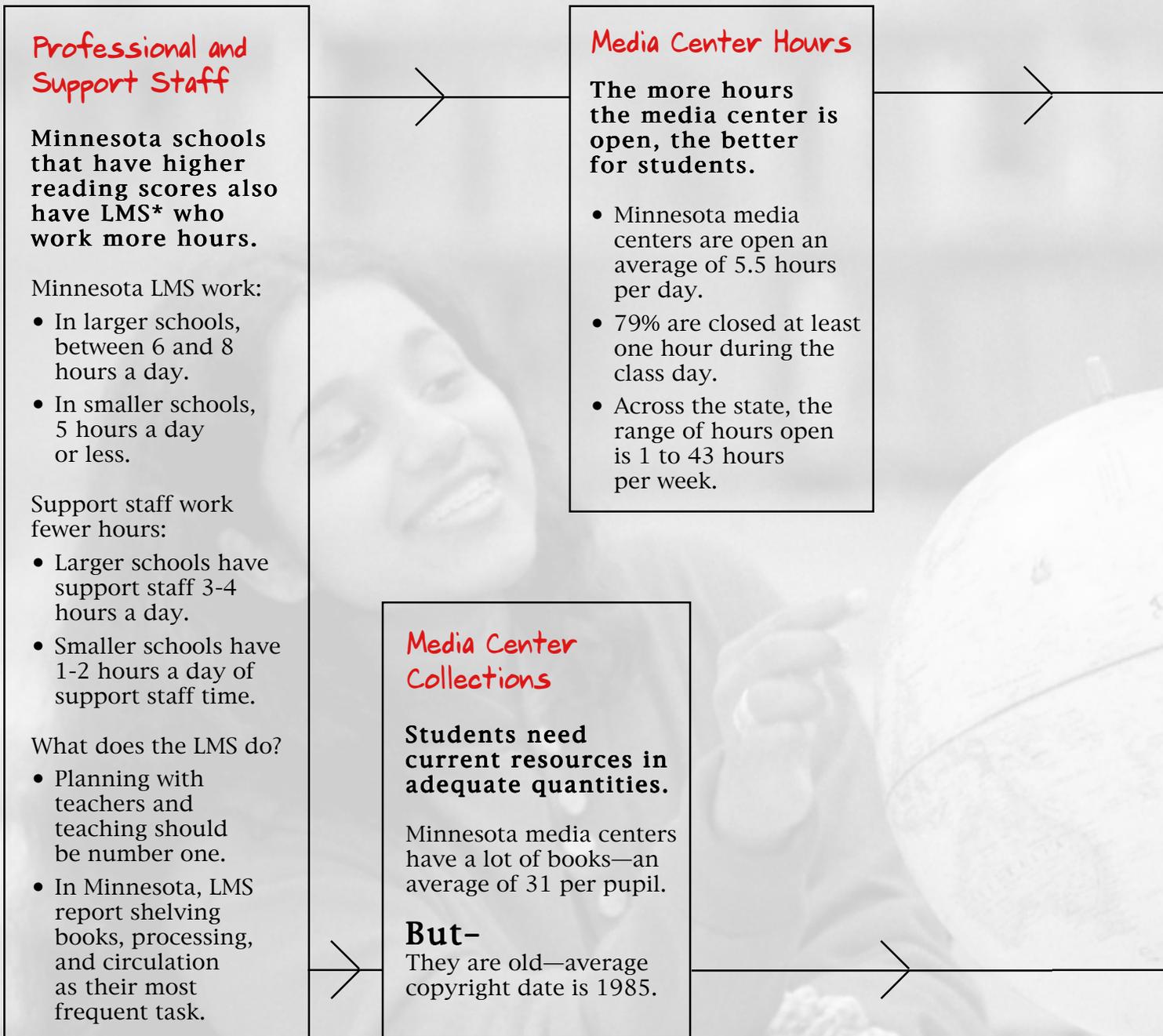


“We need professional media specialists to teach students how to use resources. High School Principal

Check It Out!

How Do Our School Library Media Programs Stack Up

These elements make a difference in student learning and achievement! The more of these things in a school, the better students do.



*Library media specialist

“We know what to do; we need the resources to do it.”
Elementary School Principal

Access to Technology

Media centers with advanced technology help students achieve. Our students have access to:

- An average of 24 networked computers in the media center.
- Full text databases, indexes, & ebooks through the Electronic Library of Minnesota.*
- More than 50% of schools that have 300 students or more have automated catalogs.

Media Program Expenditures

Minnesota Media Centers spend an average of:

- Books—\$5,107 or \$10.50 per student.
- Book budgets range from \$0 to \$30,000.
- Computers—\$4,327.

Media Center Use

Both checking out materials to take home and using them in the media center make a difference!

- Circulation
Minnesota students take out an average of 737 items week—more in elementary schools.
- Visits
Media Centers average more than 100 student visits per day—2064 per month

Staffing and Resource Make a Difference

- In Minnesota schools with above average student scores on the Grade 3, 5, and 8 reading tests, 66.8% were schools where the media specialist worked full-time.
- Twice as many Minnesota schools with above average scores had full-time media specialists.
- 84% of Minnesota schools reported a media specialist worked at least half-time in each school in the district.
- Student reading achievement in Minnesota elementary and secondary schools is related to increases in school library media program spending.

*If Media Center has adequate technology.

“It is a hopeful sign that some districts have made a commitment to media programs.” Site Visitor

Checking It Out! Best Practices

These programs demonstrate good school library media program practices.

1. Northern Lights Library Network

Lincoln High School, Thief River Falls ISD 564

“This was a busy, busy media center, attractive and inviting, with self-help directions available, but a professional never too busy to help when asked.”

- Program is an essential and integral part of the standards and curriculum.
- Team effort, involving the media specialist, paraprofessional, independent study students, and student library assistants.
- Relationship with the teaching staff is pleasant and productive.
- Students use the center independently as well as under the direction of the teacher.
- Principal and LMS think they are exemplary in all Standards areas except for the book budget.

3. Southcentral Minnesota Inter-Library Exchange

West High School, Mankato ISD 7

“One of our best visits. The principal, media specialist, and media secretary all showed pride in their jobs and media center accomplishments.”

- Full-time media secretary plus a full-time district media technician and media coordinator.
- Media specialist is extremely responsive to teachers. Kids like him too.
- Book budget has been substantial and continues.
- LMS (library media specialist) has great support from and rapport with teaching staff and administration.
- Both principal and media specialist feel the media program is exemplary in some Standards and minimum in very few.

2. Metronet

Valley View Elementary School, Bloomington ISD 271

“This energetic media program emphasizes books and literature.”

- One full-time media person, one educational aide, and one tech support person.
- Principal believes that media people should have autonomy to run their program.
- Up-to-date book collection and technology; both integrated into classroom activities.
- Media specialist works collaboratively with classroom teachers.

4. Southwest Area Multicounty Multitype Interlibrary Exchange

Pipestone Junior/Senior High, Pipestone-Jasper School ISD 2689

“Principal commented that if you don’t have the staff, you don’t have a program!”

- Unique program that is a combined public/school library facility. Many years of cooperation make it work smoothly.
- Good relationship between media specialist and administration results in financial and program support.
- Well-stocked, well-used facility.
- Positive atmosphere resulting in active use of the media center.



5. Southeast Library System

Kenyon-Wanamingo Elementary School, Kenyon-Wanamingo ISD 2172

“The obvious strength of this program is the staff who have the full support and hearty appreciation of the principal.”

- Media center is bright and colorful with space for quiet reading.
- Adequate selection of print materials and the largest non-print collection we saw.
- Doing well this year, but cutting staff for next school year. Principal and media specialist both concerned about loss of service.
- Principal would like to see improvement in technology. Budget cuts will slow this improvement.
- Media center is open one evening and one morning a week for six weeks during the summer for a reading program.

6. North Country Library Cooperative

Ely Junior/Senior High School, Ely ISD 696

“This library media program is a splendid example of what can be accomplished when the staff and administration have a vision, work cooperatively to make a plan, and implement the plan.”

- Well-planned, bright and cheerful facility designed to be easily monitored by the staff.
- Program integrated into the school curriculum beginning in the elementary grades continuing through high school.
- Demands of the high school library limits time LMS has for elementary library.
- Cooperation between the local public library and the school library on the Accelerated Reader Program.
- Principal and media specialist developed a six-year plan to improve and update the media centers, now in year six of the plan.

7. Central Minnesota Library Exchange

Milaca Secondary School (Grades 7-12), Milaca ISD 912

“This visit proved to me that an ideal secondary media center program can exist. The media specialist is a great example of how providing information gets support!”

- Library media specialist is a respected and strong advocate for her program.
- LMS works with teachers to plan and provide learning experiences for students that involve research skills, problem solving, and communication.
- Keeps the administration informed of the achievements and the needs of the media program and its impact on student learning.
- LMS work with administration resulted in \$40,000 for the collection. Unfortunately, it was reduced because of budget cuts, but the work of the media specialist did make a difference.

“These comments from the site visitors show vibrant and effective school library media programs in all regions.”

Check It Out! Recommendations

Information is power in this new century. More than ever, students need to learn information literacy and research skills for their academic work and to become productive adults in the future. School library media specialists can lead the way in teaching these skills to our students, but they need the resources to maintain effective programs.

Minnesota school library media programs are showing signs of long-term neglect in many districts. It will take a commitment at state and local levels to build media center collections, hire qualified staff, and provide the budget to support the programs.

More information on these recommendations and the Census results can be found in *Checking It Out: The Results of the Minnesota School Library Media Program Census Final Report*.

Recommendations

1. Principals, teachers, parents, and other administrators need to raise their expectations for media programs and the results they expect from these programs based on the research on the impact of school library media programs on student achievement and *Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.
2. All school districts need to make a commitment to a full-time professional media specialist and adequate para-professional staffing in every school building to ensure all students learn information literacy and research skills—and develop a love of reading.
3. Minnesota needs to make immediate state and local investments in school library media program print collections so they meet the Standard of current—books less than 10 years old. This is a long-term commitment to resource building.
4. The Legislature and the Department of Children, Families, & Learning (CFL) need to recognize the importance of school library media programs in improving student achievement. Staff is needed at the state level to help districts develop strong media programs based on the *Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.
5. The Legislature, CFL, and local districts must commit to maintaining and developing statewide resources and services to provide student access to what they need to succeed. This includes continued state support of telecommunications costs and maintenance and development of resources that expand access and availability statewide.
6. All stakeholders must work to eliminate the digital divide in Minnesota public schools. All students need access to up-to-date technology and training in how to use it.
7. The Department of Children, Families, & Learning should continue data collection on school library media programs to provide on-going measurement of program development.
8. Library media specialists and their supporters must become vocal advocates for all school library media programs. They must document and disseminate information on the impact of media programs on student achievement.



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"I think it is possible to tell what kind of school it is by what the media center is like. I want an active library where students are encouraged to use many different kinds of resources. This cannot be achieved without professional staff to provide help and supervision, an adequate budget to buy books and other resources, and support staff so the media specialist has time to plan and work with teachers. Every student deserves this kind of media center."

Junior/Senior High School Principal
Southwest Minnesota



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This document and the full report are available in PDF format at
<http://metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/index.cfm>